UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Secretary-General, in report on work of Organization, stresses need to ensure safety of peace-keepers and aid workers, resolve United Nations financial crisis, and secure more funding for development.

* Security Council urges Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to negotiate lasting peace on basis of principles agreed to in Geneva.

* UNPF Commander has inconclusive meeting with Bosnian Serb military leader; NATO launches cruise missiles against Serb targets.

* Delegates at Fourth World Conference on Women expect draft platform for action will be ready for adoption on Thursday.

* Secretary-General recommends Security Council extend MINURSO mandate until 31 January 1996; says Mission must not be withdrawn prematurely.

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The United Nations is responding flexibly to global change and to the changing needs of the international community, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's annual report on the work of the Organization. In that report, he said that calls for reform testified to the recognition by more people than ever before that the United Nations was a truly indispensable element in world affairs. He also identified three immediate problems which must be effectively addressed if the Organization were not to be irreparably damaged as a mechanism for progress.

The Secretary-General stressed that the safety and integrity of United Nations personnel in the field must be respected. When lightly armed peace-keepers or unarmed aid workers were threatened, taken hostage, harmed or killed, the world must act. The credibility of all United Nations peace operations was at stake; to preserve it, personnel must be protected as they carried out their duties.

The Organization's finances must be placed on an adequate and sustainable footing, he continued. The financial crisis continued to deepen

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because Member States delayed payment of their assessed contributions. Without substantial additional major contributions before the end of the year, the Organization's cash balance would be dangerously low. The crisis had a direct impact on efficiency and made effective management more difficult. Calls for ever-greater United Nations effectiveness under conditions of financial penury made no sense.

The Secretary-General noted that funds for development were drying up. That was a consequence of the end of the cold war, of the competing demands of peace-keeping and development for scarce resources, and of donor fatigue. The willingness to spend money on containing conflicts, while necessary and admirable, was not enough. Without funding for development, the cycle of strife, stand-off and more strife would continue. To break that cycle, sustainable human development must be instituted everywhere. A new vision of development, and a universal commitment to it, was indispensable for world progress, he concluded.

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The Security Council has urged Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) to negotiate in good faith for a lasting peace based on the declaration adopted by them at the meeting with the Contact Group in Geneva on Friday. The Council took that action in a statement by its President, Francesco Paolo Fulci (Italy), on Friday night.

At the meeting in Geneva, the parties agreed on the basic principles for a peace accord, including the continued existence of Bosnia and Herzegovina within its present international borders. They agreed that the country should consist of two democratic entities -- the existing Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with 51 per cent of the territory, and the Republica Srpska, with 49 per cent.

Also on Friday, the Council discussed the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Speakers welcomed the Geneva agreement, but expressed divergent views on the continued air strikes by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the shelling of Bosnian Serb targets by the Rapid Reaction Force. The Russian Federation said that those attacks undermined efforts for a political settlement, and that the use of force had not been preceded by the necessary consultations. The United States said that the international community had no choice but to respond robustly to the recent Bosnian Serb attack on the Sarajevo marketplace, and that the air strikes would end as soon as the Council resolutions were implemented.

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NATO has been continuing its air operations over Bosnia and yesterday used sea-launched cruise missiles against Bosnian Serb targets for the first time, according to a United Nations spokesman. The targets included air

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defence systems, radio communications and ammunition storage sites. The Bosnian Serbs fired 10 artillery rounds at the United Nations base at Tuzla airport, slightly injuring one peace-keeper. NATO aircraft responded by attacking Serb artillery positions in the area.

Meanwhile, the Commander of the United Nations Peace Forces (UNPF), General Bernard Janvier, had an "inconclusive" meeting with the Bosnian Serb military commander, General Ratko Mladic, in Belgrade, the spokesman said. He noted that there was no indication that the Serbs were withdrawing their heavy weapons from around Sarajevo.

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Delegates at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing reported that progress had been made over the weekend in negotiations on the draft platform for action. It was anticipated that the Main Committee would conclude its work on Wednesday, and that the draft would be adopted on Thursday. The remaining unresolved issues related to parental responsibilities in the area of sexual and reproductive health, abortion laws, and sexual rights, including non-discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.

Meanwhile, the Conference decided to extend its general debate until Wednesday to allow more representatives of non-governmental organizations to take the floor. Several speakers today highlighted the importance of valuing the unpaid work done by women, including work done in the home.

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The Secretary-General has recommended that the Security Council extend the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 31 January 1996. In a report dated 8 September, he said that progress in implementing the settlement plan had been disappointing in the last three months, and recalled the Council's warning that the process could not continue indefinitely. However, he stressed that premature withdrawal of MINURSO would have very grave implications for the parties and for the whole subregion and must be avoided if at all possible.

The report called attention to the results achieved in the identification of voters over the past year. Over 40 per cent of the applicants in the Territory, and half of those in the refugee camps, had been identified. Meanwhile, a detailed programme for the identification of most of the remaining applicants had been prepared. If both parties cooperated fully, the process in all four refugee camps and three of the four centres in the Territory (with the exception of Laayoune) could be completed in around five weeks. The Secretary-General appealed to the parties to make every effort to permit the expeditious implementation of the settlement plan in order to reach a just and lasting solution to the question of Western Sahara.

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